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finally, after some weeks' work, brew beer, and invite men to a *kutumya* party so that they may get some necessary granary or house built.

Distribution at the Chief's Court.

The most considerable exchange of food for labour is that which takes place at the capital, whether in payment of tribute workers (*ba mulasa*), courtiers, executive officials, or visiting councillors on tribal business. This whole system of distribution illustrates clearly not only the political and economic ideas of the Bemba but the rules of hospitality already described. Each man or woman who works for the chief[1] should be given food. The men are provided with porridge and relish cooked by the chief's wives, and the women unthreshed millet to prepare for themselves. The workers eat together in one group. The boys and young men who act as personal servants to the chief are also fed separately with cooked food, being mostly unmarried men. Older courtiers, heads of sections of the village (*bafilolo*), or messengers (*bakapasso*) are treated in more honourable fashion. They are sent a share of meat sent in as tribute, or invited to share a pot of beer on the veranda of the chief's hut. At Citimukulu's court, tribal councillors (*bakabilo*), if present in twos or threes, are treated in the same way, but if the whole council is present on matters of state, they will probably stay for a week or ten days, and then they are regularly fed by the chief's wives. In this case the whole council—some forty strong—is divided into groups (*nsaka*) based on descent and historical association.[2] Each of these groups must be provided with a separate basket of porridge and a dish of relish, and sits eating back to back in the chief's enclosure. Honoured visitors, such as members of the royal family, are sent flour, chickens, or beer by the chief and cooked food by his head wife (*umukolo*).

The organization of these supplies is naturally a complicated business. At Citimukulu's court during nine months (April 1933 to January 1934) 561 men and 324 women came to do *umulasa* labour and were fed at least one day of their service. The *bakabilo* to the number of about forty met at least twice during the year, while it is impossible to estimate the number of other persons engaged on a big chief's business. The distribution is of such

[1] Cf. Chapter XIII. About three days a year at the present time.
[2] The *nsaka* of Katongo, of Citikafula, of Cikutwe, and of Citimukulu.

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437 643 644 651 importance politically that it is supervised personally by the *mfumu* himself, who watches meat cut up in front of him and gives the orders for grain to be given out. A special steward is in charge of his big personal granary and hands out baskets of grain each morning to the senior wives in charge of the feeding of the *umulasa* labourers, or the brewing of beer for any special purposes. The wives themselves have their own small personal granaries and cook dishes for the chief which he divides as he pleases,[1] or make presents of beer as they choose. All the three or four senior wives distribute hospitality to honoured guests in their own rights, and the *umukolo*, in particular, is required to be very punctilious in sending dishes of honour to travelling notables.

All the *bamukolo* I met were women of a good deal of organizing ability, capable of supervising the younger wives, arranging for the endless grinding and brewing required in the capital,[2] and the stirring of the huge pots of porridge to be served in enormous eating-baskets about eight times the size of an ordinary *icipe*. Any one who sits in the inside of an *umukolo's* hut during the late afternoon will know at once by the bustle, the concentrated faces, and the ring of waiting food-baskets that important and responsible work is on hand.

The whole of this system of distributing food is of course necessary to the chief if he is to make gardens and conduct tribal business through his councillors. But it is more than this. The giving of food, as in most African tribes, is an absolutely essential attribute of chieftainship, just as it is of authority in the village or household, and the successful organization of supplies at the capital seems to be associated in the Bemba mind with the security and well-being of the whole tribe itself. This fact may be said to be symbolized by the institution of the sacred kitchen (*kamitembo*) at the courts of the big chiefs (Citimukulu, Mwamba, and Nkula). From the outside the *kamitembo* looks like an ordinary hut, although specially well built. It is one of the sacred houses built by the *bakabilo* with special rites at the founding of a chief's new village. In fact it is the first to be built on the site. At Citimukulu's founding ceremony a special hereditary official, the Mwana Bwalya,

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[1] The cooking of the chief's own food is usually done by the *umukolo* herself, or by some old woman specially appointed to the task, since the taboos protecting his fire from sex impurity are very strict.

[2] Chiefs' wives do not have to pile branches in the fields, but do very heavy grinding-work for beer-making and feeding the workers.

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CHAPTER X

DISTRIBUTION IN A TYPICAL VILLAGE

Character of the Village.

621 TO illustrate the distribution of food in an actual Bemba village I have chosen notes taken at Kasaka near Shiwa Dandu from 1 September to 7 October 1933. This was a settlement of twenty-nine huts, that is to say about the average size. The community was principally composed of four matrilocal family groups of which the male or female heads were near relatives of the headman. The members of the younger generation were closely knit by a number of cross-cousin marriages. Its structure was probably typical of the older Bemba village in which matrilocal marriage is still universally practised. Moreover, since the observations coincided with the recent copper slump, the proportion of adult men to women was unusually high in the village—i.e. nineteen men to twenty-three women—so that it was possible to see the traditional family units at their joint economic work. Kasaka stood at least 60 miles from the main motor road from Abercorn to Broken Hill and over 400 from the copper belt to the south, so that its direct contact with European civilization was slight, and native life had been little changed. On the other hand, the wage-earning possibilities were higher than in most parts of the country, since Kasaka stood seventeen miles from a European plantation (Shiwa Dandu) which afforded the younger men opportunities for work, and four out of the nineteen men were regularly employed there during the week, returning home at the week-ends. All but two of the fourteen younger men had visited the mines at least once, and one had been four times, but most of the women had never left their own country, or even this particular part of the territory. In this last respect the village was typical of conditions over most of the plateau. Certain environmental and seasonal difficulties as to the food-supply were of course limited to this particular area and these will be specified.

651 621 The financial position of the villagers can be gauged from the following figures: four out of the twenty adult males were too old to pay tax and therefore needed money only for occasional garments for themselves and their wives. Each had acquired one

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cloth or blanket during the past year,[1] whether through a gift from a son in work at the mines, the payment at a daughter's marriage, or the sale of beer. One had been able to employ two young boys to cut trees for him through the generosity of an absent nephew. For the rest, these older men lived from harvest to harvest without using money at all, and their position is typical of their contemporaries all over the district. The four men employed at Shiwa Dandu were regularly earning 10s. a month, while most of the others had worked for two to three months at a time locally to earn their tax and to make small extra sums for clothes and other European goods. Three had used, or were using, paid labour to make their gardens. One, an unusually intelligent cultivator, had paid his tax by the sale of vegetables to Europeans, and three had made a few extra shillings with beer. It is doubtful whether on an average the men of this village handled more than 25s. a head during the year, of which 10s. went in tax.[2] In a community with fewer opportunities for work locally, this sum would probably be smaller.

As regards its food-supply, the village was in a fairly satisfactory position according to Bemba standards. Its gardens had not been destroyed by locusts, and at the recent harvest the average figure for the contents of its sixteen granaries was 2,804 lb. of millet. At the time of observation, about three months after the reaping and storing of the grain, the supply was still adequate and caused the people no concern. Beer was brewed seven times during thirty-two days and two gourds were brought into the village as presents. These figures show that the millet-supply was quite sufficient, and if the people went short of *ubwali* it was because the women could not or would not cook it, and not because of its scarcity.

The relish situation was quite different, and it soon appeared that the provision of *umunani* was the chief difficulty of the housewife at this particular season of the year. The garden vegetables were over. The mushrooms would not appear for another two months, and though there were stored legumes, &c., to fall back on, there were such small quantities of these available that housewives were afraid to use them frequently for fear they would not last till the end of the season. This left nothing for relish but wild spinaches or *icikunda* orchids—food that had to be hunted

[1] At a cost of about 3s.
[2] The tax has since been reduced to 7s. 6d. per annum.

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relation between the political and religious functions of the chief 622
and his rights as a landlord has certain practical implications. At 423
a time when money payments are being substituted for old tribal
dues in many parts of Africa, it is important to be clear what the 643
Bemba chief originally claimed, and still claims, and it can be stated definitely that however peremptory his demands on his people's labour and garden produce, he seems to have left them complete security as to their use of land and to have allowed them the right to select particular plots—a freedom probably associated with the ample supply of land in this area.

Tribute on Land.

We must now turn to the second claim of the Bemba chief, viz. 622
that he owns not only his land, but also the food that is produced 651
in it. 'Everything is theirs!' (i.e. the chiefs') as Candamale, formerly the hereditary burier of the royal family, expressed it, 'The 643
meat, the fish, all the trees, all the land, and the honey'[1]—which is equivalent to saying that the Bemba chief gives his subjects permission to settle in his territory, but that all the crops they grow belong by right to him. Our problem is to discover the forms in which these dues are exacted.

This is a difficult aspect of land tenure to analyse. The economic privileges and duties of African kings have suffered inevitable changes with the institution of European government and the introduction of a money currency. Bemba chiefs and elders speak with enthusiasm of the 'good old days' when subjects brought constant gifts of food to the capital. 'All day long they carried tribute (*batula*). They brought millet and beer and meat. They were always bringing tribute. There was always food at the *umusumba*!' is a typical account of the state of affairs as they delight to describe it.

From these day-dreams of a glorious past it is difficult to extract 643
a case of concrete fact. The most extreme instance of the exercise 651
of the chief's rights of ownership over food seemed to me to be contained in an old councillor's memory of an actual incident which took place before the coming of the white man. He told me that in the reign of Cikwanda, a former Paramount, a rich commoner had fled the territory of his chief to take refuge elsewhere. The Paramount immediately sent a messenger to the headman of the fugitive's village saying to him, 'Take possession of X's food,

[1] *Shyonse shyabo! Inama, lisabi, imiti yonse, ne calo conse, no buci!*

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643 and look after it for the chief'.[1] The relatives of the exile had
651 apparently no rights at all to his property. When I commented to the present Citimukulu on the apparent injustice of this action he said, in defence of his ancestors, 'Well, but all the food and all the gardens belonged to the *mfumu* in any case', thus expressing the rights of ownership in the most absolute form. But it is clear that in the ordinary course of events the chief limited himself to certain dues, such as demands for food for himself and for his followers in any emergency, hospitality when travelling through his domains, and a regular tribute of certain crops, game, and fish. All these claims are exercised at the present day, to however limited an extent.

622 All Bemba chiefs get food brought them whenever they travel,
651 as do also royal princesses holding titles, and sometimes the sons, nephews, and grandsons of the royal family. Two headmen of
484 villages on the roadside told me they were excused paying annual tribute because they had regularly to entertain their chiefs
643 when travelling to and from the Government office at Kasama. Another headman who had given up carrying annual tribute to the capital, owing to the distance, still claimed that he would bring flour, chickens, and beer to the *mfumu* if he heard the latter was travelling through the district. Young men at work with Europeans bring the chief no tribute in kind, but near Kasama sometimes carry him sums of money varying from 1*s.* to 3*s.* when he visits the Boma there. I saw the employees on the estate of Shiwa Dandu give the late Nkula 1*s.* or 2*s.* each when he came on tour.

622 The people readily admit also their duty to give the chief food
651 when he sends for it, and indeed with primitive methods of storage it would be almost impossible otherwise for him to accumulate
643 enough food at the capital to suffice for sudden emergencies, such as the arrival of honoured visitors, or the presence of councillors on tribal business. The process of brewing which demands anything from four to seven days for completion also makes it difficult for the wives of a chief to keep sufficient beer for all occasions. During 1933–4, a year of shortage owing to locust raids, I saw Citimukulu send out constantly for millet, fish, and beer to feed

[1] *Ulebakile mfumu fyakulya fya kampanda.* Cf. also Cullen Gouldsbury's statement that the chief would put a taboo on the gardens of a man who left him without permission. 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xv, no. lix, 1916, p. 175.

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his councillors during a long series of meetings held to discuss the deposition of one of the hereditary officials, the appointment of the chief's new head wife, and the building of his new capital. He also sent out for food and beer for himself and his wives. I also saw many instances at the courts of Citimukulu, Nkula, and Mwamba of the chief's practice of sending a messenger round neighbouring villages to ask for beer on the sudden arrival of visiting chiefs or Government officials. In November 1931 the chief Lucembe received a messenger at 8 a.m. to announce the arrival of a neighbouring Bisa chief, Cunda Ponde, to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. Lucembe carried on a ten minutes' conversation with the messenger, during which time he was evidently thinking hard. The moment he was alone he dispatched followers in four different directions to fetch beer, mentioning certain villages by name. It arrived slung on poles, and carried at a jog trot, at about noon, for it is the business of a chief to know exactly which of his villages has supplies of any particular food at any given time. In fact one of the important functions of the administrative officials and messengers who go between one *amuramba* and another is to report on the state of the millet harvest, the ground-nuts, and legumes of the villages through which they pass and the game killed there, and the chief's need of supplies at the capital is one of his greatest incentives to encourage agricultural production.

A regular annual tribute in certain foods (*ukutula*) is a due considered apart from these unexpected levies on supplies. The payment of such tribute is almost universal among Bantu peoples. Here it consists of an offering made on each year's harvest (millet in particular), beer and also, under certain conditions, a tribute on game, fish, or honey found in the bush. It is difficult to be clear how big this tribute was in the old days. At present the people tend to exaggerate its size—the chief because he is anxious to show how powerful he is, and the commoners because they like to complain of their sufferings. Both the chiefs Nkula and Lucembe told me on the first day of my visits to them that their subjects brought them 'one or two' baskets of millet every harvest as well as beer, but afterwards started to grumble as to the difficulties of getting their dues enforced, and I saw myself that the supplies brought in were actually small.

Thus of fourteen villages in which I collected figures in 1933–4 three had sent no tribute, one having special exemption on ritual

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grounds; one fishing village had sent three carrying baskets of fish, one voluntarily and two sent for; five had sent two gourds of beer each voluntarily; two had sent one gourd of beer and one carrying basket of millet; and two were waiting to send gifts until the chief asked for them. These figures show that the due is not fixed at the present time, but that an offering of some kind or other is usually made during the year. It is important to note that the contribution is made from the village as a whole. It is as a member of a village that a man gets permission to cultivate land, and it is the community as a whole under the leadership of the appointed headman which makes the offering. To collect it the headman puts an empty basket outside his hut and calls on each housewife to make her contribution. The levy on each person would thus be little more than 2 or 3 lb. per head, or about 3*d.* worth at current rates.

The tribute of game and fish comes under a different heading. In all Bantu societies so far described the chief gets a portion of an animal killed, or found dead in the bush, with special rights to some animals such as the elephant or hippo, and to leopard skins. To the Bemba the finding of game in the bush is essentially a matter of luck—the good fortune which only the *imipashi* can bring if approached by the ruling chiefs in the right way. Hence it used to be considered particularly important to carry a portion of the meat as a present to the capital as well as to the headman's hut.[1] In the old days, the meat of all big animals such as elephants or hippopotami belonged to the chief, and such game was in fact hunted only at his orders. A part of any buck killed in nets or pits would also be carried to the capital. The chief's portion does not seem to have been specified very clearly, and was variously described to me as either a front leg and breast or a hind leg. Nowadays game is scarce, and the powers of the chief greatly diminished, but it is still true that the inhabitants of a capital probably bring the whole of the buck to the chief for distribution; those in the neighbourhood bring a portion of the animal, while in distant villages tribute is brought in the case of unusual good luck or an unexpected find of a dead animal in the bush—treasure trove to which a chief has particular rights.

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In the case of fish, the supply is too irregular to make possible an annual tribute, except from villages lying in the big rivers, such

[1] Though the chief must have been powerful to enforce these rights and people admit that game was sometimes 'hidden in the bush' (*ukufisa mu mpanga*).

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as the Chambesi. The supply of dried fish from these areas was formerly an important asset of the chief of the district, and even nowadays Citimukulu and Nkula appear to get one or more big carrying-baskets of fish from these fishing communities each year, and more if the supply is plentiful.

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In conclusion, therefore, it is clear that the *mfumu's* claim to own the food of his *icalo* is limited to his demand for supplies in times of emergency, to hospitality when travelling, and to tribute of millet, beer, meat, and fish, and that the latter offerings are made by the headman of each village and not by an individual alone. It is impossible to compare the amounts of food received by the modern chief with those given to his predecessors, since we have no concrete facts to go upon. But it is evident that the people still acknowledge the claims of the modern ruler to some tribute, however small, and even in cases where the *mfumu* is forced to pay money for food, as happens occasionally, he is yet expected to give less than the current prices for the goods. In April 1934 I saw Citimukulu pay money for beer during a time of great shortage, but he got two gourds of beer for one shilling instead of one, and Nkula, during the previous November, bought millet with salt, but again gave less than the usual rates of exchange.[1] The old *ukutula* dues have neither completely lapsed, nor have they been superseded by money payments. Hence, their economic and political importance lasts to the present day.

The substitution of money for tribute in kind has only taken place to a very small extent in this area. Many South African chiefs are able to levy substantial dues on the earnings of their own men at the mines. Schapera states that it is common for a tribute of one pound to be demanded by a chief from all those who have been away at work. He gives an example of a Tschwana chief, who, as early as 1882, sent an age-grade to Kimberley to earn £8 apiece to buy guns and ammunition, and recently (1932) of another who made a levy of £5 for a National school.[2] In

[1] In somewhat the same way most Bemba women are willing to sell grain to the Government at less than they can get from their fellows. In spite of the patient effort of officials to explain to them that they are perfectly free agents in the matter many are themselves convinced that they are under compulsion to bring what the Government send for, and to accept any price offered, and that they win the favour of the authorities by so doing.

[2] *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. I. Schapera, 1934, p. 46; also I. Schapera, 'Economic Conditions in a Bechuanaland Native Reserve', *S. African Journal of Science*, vol. xxx, 1933, p. 645.

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the absence of tribal treasuries in all the Native territories of South Africa, levies have been make in cash for building schools, making roads, boring for water, &c. In the Bemba area the amount of money in circulation is very limited and the recent institution of tribal treasuries will make it possible for various social services to be provided from this source. There is also the historical fact that the chiefs of the Southern Bantu had formerly the right to 'eat up' the cattle of their subjects and hence it is but a small extension of this right to 'eat up' cash earnings. In the Bemba country, on the other hand, there was very little property in the possession of a commoner that his chief could seize.

Tribute Labour.

It only remains to discuss the third claim of the Bemba chief, viz. that all the labour of his people is his by right. All Bantu chiefs of whom we have any information have claims to the labour of their subjects. The tribe itself is in essence a chiefdom, a body of men who are loyal to one ruler. From the historical material we have available, it is clear that such units were built up first on a kinship basis. To the body of men who acknowledged kinship, real or fictitious, to one chief were added other elements, until the group grew to a large size. It was allegiance to the one chief which kept these people together through their long period of migrations and constant wars. The subjects of a chief were his men in a particular sense, even though the position of the freeman was distinguished from that of the slave in areas where subject peoples were incorporated as servants, or the institution of slavery existed.

The service a man owed his chief was either economic or military, that is to say, he might be employed in the cultivation of the royal gardens, clearing the roads, or building the chief's huts, or, in the old days, he might serve as a warrior. In some cases, the service a subject owed was specified and the army or labour force was organized. In other cases, the chief had a general right to call for assistance when in need. Thus, among the Nguni group of South Africa, and in particular among the Zulu and Swazi, the tribal organization on an age-grade basis was adapted to further military ambitions, and the subjects' service to their chief resembled a form of conscription, in which every young man of the tribe was drafted into a 'regiment' held in readiness to work for the king in

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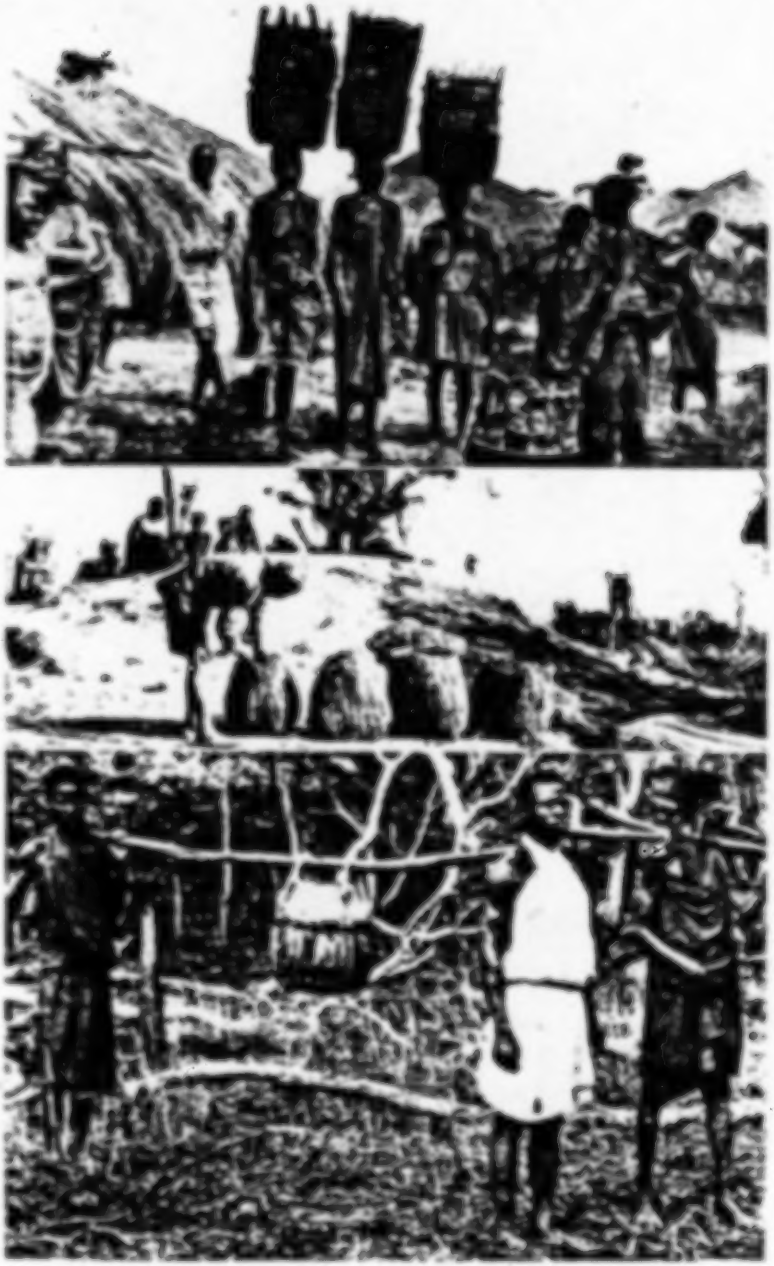

Tribute labour. Carrying in the Paramount Chief's crop of ground-nuts, 1933.

Tribute. Fishing villages send four baskets of fish as their dues to the Paramount Chief, who is sitting with his beer-pot on top of the mound, 1933.

Tribute labour. Carrying blessed seed to sow Chief Nkula's millet garden, 1933.

[facing p. 286]

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his gardens, cattle kraals, village, or on the battle-field. Such an organized labour force still exists to-day in Swaziland in the *amabutho* or regiments of the Swazi chief.[1]

Among the Central Bantu, the chiefs had despotic powers over their subjects—in fact the right of life or death.[2] They had also general claims to the service of their people in whatever way it was needed. The Bemba king was the ruler of a military tribe as was the Zulu chief, but his army was evidently less highly organized than in the case of the Southern Bantu, and it was the village that provided the military contingent, not the age-grade. Over and above this, each chief was able to exact special dues of service to be used for agricultural purposes, known by the term *umulasa*. Our problem, therefore, is to discover the form in which these specific dues of tribute labour are exacted and how they affect the people's right to use the land. Is the service given in return for permission to cultivate, as the squatter on a European farm works so many months of the year in lieu of rent; or is the *umulasa* work given as part of a series of political dues by which a man's allegiance to his chief is expressed?

At present, the tribute service is a specified one and not a very extensive obligation. The exaggerated demands made by some of the South African chiefs on their subjects are not found in this area. The people rarely work more than two or three days a year and are very seldom called up more than once.

The amount of tribute labour demanded formerly is difficult to estimate. Here again survivors from the past delight to exaggerate the splendour of their rulers. They tell of the numbers of commoners who used to pour into the capital to serve the Citimukulu and they describe their work. It consisted for the men of tree-cutting, hut-building, hoeing, fencing, sowing, and in some cases of the traditional female occupations such as piling branches and reaping; while the women piled branches, reaped, carried in millet or ground-nuts from distant granaries, cleared paths or pulled up ground-nuts. These are still the tasks for which *umulasa* labour is used. The tribute service was and still is an act of recognition of

[1] H. Beemer, 'The Development of Military Organization in Swaziland', *Africa*, vol. x, 1937.

[2] If a family took summary revenge for a murder they had, according to Gouldsbury, to pay the chief a slave, as they had killed one of his people without permission. Cullen Gouldsbury, 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xiv, no. liii, 1914, p. 381.

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622 651 643 the chief's authority as well as an economic task carried out for him. Nowadays labourers who arrive at the capital must do formal obeisance to the chief by rolling on the ground in front of him and clapping (*ukutota*), and when they leave they repeat the process with full ceremony. Chiefs seemed to me to speak of this act of homage with pleasure. One described the *umulasa* system in words like this. 'They come: they work for three days: I make them porridge and then they come and make obeisance and go.' It is interesting to watch the men and women returned from the fields gathering on the outskirts of the village so that they may all walk in to the chief's enclosure together, and make their salute formally.

622 651 177 643 The *umulasa* system itself has been very strongly affected by European contact. In the early days of British administration it was discouraged, though never actually forbidden. Now many officials seem conscious of the value of the system as maintaining the chief's authority, but the latter's rights to *umulasa* cannot be enforced in a white court since they are held to be contrary to the Geneva Conventions on 'Forced Labour'. This lack of Government support has lead to the refusal of many natives to do their service. The introduction of paid labour has also struck at the roots of the system. 'The white man came to teach us not to work except for money', one old Bemba said, when bewailing the uncompromising attitude of the modern youth.[1] The exact amount of labour now done for the chief is difficult to assess. It is clearly very much less than before. Of twelve villages I visited during 1931 and 1933 five had sent no labour during the year (three of these owing to ritual privilege) and the others had sent contingents varying from two men and women to ten and twelve women respectively. The service is limited now by common consent to the inside of a week or even three days. From figures taken at Citimukulu's village during a nine-month period from April to December 1933, I estimate that 561 men were called up to work and 329 women, and that these worked on an average 3·89 days in

[1] The common association in the native mind between Christianity and European economic values is clear from the statement of a young Bemba asked to help some one in a difficulty, 'I am a Christian. I don't do things for nothing.'

[2] The figures of men-days worked were as follows:

MEN. Tree-cutting 855; piling branches 143; sowing millet 89; reaping sorghum 68; fetching food from different villages 14.

WOMEN. Piling branches 446; carrying grain from temporary granaries 146;

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the case of the men and 3·5 days for the women.[1] These labourers were drawn from 81 villages out of 160 showing that it is very far from true that every Bemba works for his chief at the present time. Added to this the number of adult males at work outside the territory means that the supply of available labour is almost halved. Two small chieftainesses, Canda we Eiya and Mulenga, complained that they could get no gardens made for them without the support of their territorial chiefs, and in May 1933 Mwamba, one of the biggest of the latter, had chosen the site for his capital, but could not get sufficient labour to build it until the copper slump sent men home to their villages. Citimukulu himself constantly grumbled that he could not get his gardens made, and even his band of personal followers and singers was very much reduced.

It is nevertheless a fact that the chief's rights are still recognized, even if he cannot always enforce them. Where money payments are substituted for tribute labour—and this only takes place very occasionally—it is an accepted principle that the *mfumu* should pay below the current rate. Thus in March 1934 Citimukulu summoned two bricklayers to work *umulasa* for him, offering them 2*s.* 6*d.* a week instead of 7*s.* 6*d.*, the current wage, and this sum was considered generous. Chiefs also pay the tax of some of their followers, in return for work done, and in this case the latter usually get food and other court perquisites, and do an indefinite amount of labour. I saw Nkula pay a 4*l.* court fine for two subjects who were unable to find the money, but he ordered them to build him a house in return, for which the current pay was 10*s.* The legitimate claims of the chief to service are still perfectly well recognized in compromise arrangements of this kind.

It is also obvious that no system has yet been devised as a substitute for *umulasa* labour. To pay even the small force of labour Citimukulu employed during the period in which I took notes, he would have required nearly £56 at the current rate of wages out of a total annual salary of £60 for all personal and tribal expenses. So that it must be acknowledged that even if the *umulasa* system

[1] hoeing village beds 126; fetching fish and other foods 76; cleaning paths 96; digging up ground-nuts or Livingstone potato beds 68; reaping 12.
TOTAL 970 men-days.
For the building of the chief's new huts in a new village 807, including 421 spent making a brick court-house, as against 386 to build 10 huts of the ordinary type. 174 men-days were spent by the women in white-washing or making cement floors of the same houses.

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622 is functioning inefficiently at the present time (cf. p. 264) it is the
651 only means by which the political machinery of the tribe continues
177 to exist.

Tribute as Rent.

622 It will be asked at once how far this tribute in labour and kind
651 can be classed as rent? If by this term we mean a fixed amount of
643 work or goods given in return for the right to use a fixed amount of land, then obviously the dues of the Bemba chief cannot be so described. They are part of a series of mutual obligations observed between subject and chief, of which the right to land is one of the gains to the commoner, and the right to service just one of a series of chiefly prerogatives. To make the situation clearer we should list the advantages both parties gained by the arrangement. Why did the commoner work for the chief? Partly because he was afraid of his power and partly because there were positive inducements to do so. We saw that a commoner who made a garden in the chief's *icalo* without permission was liable to have his crops seized in the old days. Some natives now say that refusal to work *amulasa* [184] or *ukutala* would have meant mutilation in pre-European times: 622 others argue, 'No. Since it would be stupid to cut off the hand of 651 a man who would then be unable to work *amulasa* for his chief 681 again.' One man told me that with the first default a man would 643 have been scolded, and at the second his chickens and granary would have been seized. But in actual fact no old man I talked to could remember an actual instance of a man refusing to pay his dues, and I think such occasions were probably limited to open acts of defiance on the part of powerful young members of the royal clan trying to set up power on their own. Of commoners I constantly got the answer, *Ukuti bakana shyani?*, 'And why should they refuse?', with genuine surprise in the tone. The fact that the Bemba believed that their gardens were unlikely to yield without the chief's blessing has been stressed again and again in these pages. While some natives deny that the *imipashi* would refuse their beneficence to men who refused to work for their chief or give tribute, others assert equally emphatically that this is so, and all are convinced that it is definitely unlucky to offend him. To say of a chief, a white man, or any one in high authority that he is angry (*ukufalwa*) is a serious thing, even at the present day. Small lapses are not expected to be followed automatically by

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supernatural punishment, but a series of broken obligations such as really to offend a chief are viewed with apprehension by young men as well as old.

Besides this it was the positive aim of every Bemba to win the good will of his chief as we have seen, and the headman who willingly brought workers for the *mfumu* was sure of favours sooner or later. It is possible to watch a headman courting the chief in this way even to-day, and he himself uses any privileges he has had confirmed under the Native Courts Ordinance, such as the right to give a man permission to build a village, to reward any subject who tries to please him.

The tribute labourers got food and beer during the visit and they worked under pleasant conditions in large gangs of friends. Even during my visit I never heard complaints of *umulasa* where the chiefs had means of feeding their workers, and the visit to the capital is considered an opportunity to meet relatives and celebrities, to put grievances before the chief, or to transact any other business. The people still definitely prefer their ruler to have a big granary. It gives them, I think, a sense of security—a feeling of certainty that there will be food at the capital and a knowledge that they are working for a powerful and successful man (cf. p. 214). Besides this, a hungry man has technically the right to call upon his chief for help. I did not hear of this claim being made very often, but still, in a sense, the *umulasa* garden and *umulasa* granary are recognized as belonging to the people. A man can steal from the tribute garden of a chief, but not from those of his wives, and I have sometimes heard old natives speak with pride of 'our' granary, adding, 'It was we who filled it to overflowing'. Thus the commoner got by his labour the sense of supernatural support, a personal approach to his chief, food in return for his work, support in time of starvation, and, as we shall see, leadership in economic pursuits. The chief in return got extra supplies of food to distribute, the means of supporting his tribal council, the necessary labour for tribal undertakings such as road-building, and last, but not least, prestige (cf. Chap. XII).

In brief the extravagant claims of the Bemba king to own all his land and everything that grows or lives in it, only gave him the right to exact small regular dues on the labour and produce of his people, and to call on them for further help in times of emergency. These levies exist, but are very much reduced to-day. They

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622 formed only one element in the relationship of mutual interdepen-
651 dence between subject and chief by which the commoner, in
643 return for accepting the political authority of his ruler, gained complete security as to his rights of occupying any amount of land he could use. He still has this security to-day, and can still be certain of the right to use his land in any way he pleases, except of course by selling it.

Land Tenure and Political Organization.

The political organization of the Bemba is based very directly upon this system of land tenure as is the case in most Bantu societies. The *umulasa* system makes for tribal cohesion in a sparsely populated district, because it emphasizes the unity of the village community and brings the people in direct personal contact with their chief—possibly their only opportunity of meeting him during the year. For the young at any rate, the week spent at the capital is an education in the political machinery of the tribe, and a means by which the authority of the chief and his council is displayed. The bringing of tribute to the *umusumba* could not be defended on the grounds of economic efficiency alone. It is a common sight to see, for instance, meat brought a two days' journey from one part of an *icalo* and distributed in a rather high condition, to *umulasa* labourers from another, and the inhabitants of a village who brought a basket of millet as tribute to the chief, at one time of the year, might consume an almost identical amount of grain in the form of porridge when next arriving at the capital to do their *umulasa* labour. But where the economic life of the people is so clearly dominated by the political, the exaction of these dues on land has an important secondary function in maintaining authority in the tribe.

622 It is also obvious that it is the chief's right to tribute and labour
651 that gives him sufficient surplus food to feed his servants, his
647 executive officials, his panel of legal advisers, and his tribal council.
643 Some of these live at the capital but do not willingly give their days to hearing cases unless the chief gives them beer or food.[1] Others come from long distances, and will only spend the necessary fortnight or three weeks at the *umusumba* if they are fed. Without a full granary the chief is apt to find his whole civil service, if we may

[1] Since my visit a payment of £1 a year to twenty-five of the *bahabilo* has been instituted. 'Pim Report,' p. 188.

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so call it, melt away. Besides this, his prestige will gradually go when he is no longer able to carry out his obligations on the same scale as before. The situation has in fact reached a kind of impasse at the moment. Because the *mfumu* gets less labour, he makes smaller gardens and has less food to feed his workers, so that they in their turn are less willing to serve him another year. From figures I collected during my visit it was clear that in some capitals the labourers were getting no food at all in return for their work. The late Nkula employed a hunter, and had a reputation for giving his people meat. Consequently he always seemed able to get work done for him. Sub-chief Lucembe was a hunter himself and lived in good game country. He was therefore in a fortunate position. But Citimukulu sometimes sent men away without food, or gave them one meal in two days, while the women were supposed to bring their own supplies and cook for themselves. Mukuikile, a sub-chief in the Mpika district, fed the men, but not the women. It is clear from these instances that the modern chief is no longer able to carry out his obligations to his people. Those who grumble at the chief's lack of hospitality have reason on their side, but to refuse to do their service as a protest increases the difficulty.

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As a second result, many chiefs now fail to keep their panel of advisers and councillors at court to transact the necessary tribal business. I have seen the Citimukulu hear cases alone with his clerk, and during 1934 the *bakâbilo* summoned by him on important matters of business invariably melted away before the end of the meeting because they had not enough food. It took a period of three months of alternately summoning the council and then dismissing it because of shortage, before the work could be carried through.

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Chiefs are also beginning perforce to refuse food to the hungry, and even to their poor relations. In January 1934 Citimukulu gave up the distinction between his *umulasa* granary and his personal one, and fed his wife and family on anything he could lay hands on. The right to take food from the royal mounds (*mputa*) already limited to near relatives, was still further curtailed. In July 1933 I heard the guardian of the Paramount's granary walk round the village at night shouting, 'Listen everyone! Hunger has fallen! No one is to dig up cassava from the chief's *mputa*. If he is hungry let him come to the chief and make obeisance and he will be given something.' It is true that this failure of commissariat occurred during a year when the locusts had done their maximum damage and in

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of the old dues on land, since they are to be used for new developments such as road-building, schools, clinics, &c., and not to institute paid service for unpaid labour dues.[1]

Here, as in many cases of adjustment between black and white, there appear to be two difficulties—the European's failure to understand the tribal machine, and a fundamental difference in point of view. 'Forced Labour' has an ugly sound to our ears. The claim of the African chief to be landlord of his whole territory is apt to strike the European as almost fantastic, and the administrator often feels it his duty to protect the natives of any particular district against any exorbitant demands their rulers may base upon it. To the white philanthropist it appears fundamentally unjust that a man should have to work without pay, at the arbitrary command of another, and that his right to live and cultivate in an area should depend on his willingness to work for the political head of that district. It is taken for granted that the *umulasa* system should be abandoned as soon as possible, as suiting ill with European conceptions of justice and the individual method of landholding which it is hoped the Bemba will finally adopt when they have been taught fixed methods of cultivation.[2]

At the same time, the discouragement of the *umulasa* system,

[1] The annual revenue of the Bemba from the new treasury scheme has been reckoned at £1,303, of which £995 goes in salaries to chiefs, &c. The recent Pim report recommends that 20 per cent. of the native tax should be remitted to the native treasury instead of 10 per cent. as at present. Op. cit., pp. 184, 190.

[2] As far as abstract justice is concerned, there would seem to be little to choose between black and white conceptions. The European attitude to unpaid service prevents the Government from approving of the *umulasa* system, and also made it impossible in 1933 for the administration to accept service in lieu of money during an economic slump, in spite of the frequent requests of Bemba chiefs that their people should be allowed to work off their tax in this way. This seemed incredible to the native. His traditional obligations to his chief were, after all, paid in commodities which were easily available—food and labour—whereas the Government demands for a money tax made it necessary for him to leave his territory in most instances to look for work. Otherwise, he suffered imprisonment, in which he did a month's unpaid labour for the Government, and was released, still owing arrears of tax! (By the tax-relief scheme of 1935, tax defaulters were allowed to work off their tax at slightly below the current wages, on public works.)

European concern at an institution which binds natives to work for their chief in return for the right of cultivation seems also inconsistent, since the squatter system of land-tenure is the only means by which a large portion of the native inhabitants of South Africa claim any right to land to cultivate at all, and, in the latter case, the natives work a legal minimum, varying from ninety days to six months a year in return for the right to settle. Added to which, the Bemba is free to go where he pleases without reference to his chief, whereas the South

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622 without adequate provision for the running of the political machine,
●651 naturally reduces the efficiency of the chief and his council to a
636 dangerous extent, and even with such a provision, the abolition of all voluntary service for the tribe brings one of the most educational influences to which Bemba youth is subject, to an end.

423 To conclude, Bemba rights to the use of land are part of a reci-
622 procal series of obligations between subject and chief. The former
651 accepts the political status of subject and membership of a village
657 group. He gives respect, labour, and tribute to his chief, and in
643 return he is able to cultivate as much land as he pleases and to occupy it for as long as he needs. The latter prays to the tribal spirits in order to make the land productive, initiates economic effort, feeds the hungry, and maintains his court and tribal councillors—all that the Bemba mean by saying that he is 'working' his land. The political machinery founded on this system of land-tenure is breaking down with changing religious beliefs and the chief's diminishing power to exact his legal dues. But from the agricultural point of view the position of the commoner remains secure, and no Bemba chief has yet profited from changing conditions to limit his subjects' right of cultivation or has tried to exact a profit from his theoretical ownership of land.

Rights of Selection and Occupation.

423 I have discussed rather fully the rights of the Bemba to occupy land as these are traditionally defined between subject and chief. What is the situation as between one commoner and another? As far as the chief is concerned a man may clear the bush anywhere in the *icalo*, if he accepts the status of a subject and membership of a village community. This fact was made clear to me when listening to a case brought before Citimukulu's court. On this occasion the headman of village A on one side of a river complained that villagers from B on the opposite bank had crossed the stream and cut gardens in the bush immediately near his village instead of cultivating on the other side. Citimukulu heard the case at some length, but gave his decision without hesitation. He declared that no action lay, and dismissed all the litigants. He said to the assembled court, 'They are all my people. It is my *icalo* and

African squatter native cannot leave a farm without permission from his owner, and in some districts the native who breaks his contract with his landlord is convicted under a penal code.

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without offering it to the dead, exclaimed: 'It is a crime. It is to steal';[1] and one of the 'Wives of the Relics' prayed at Mwamba's court: 'You Spirits, the people are eating your food gluttonously. They are eating your food without respect. We ask for mercy!...'[2] In the simplest cases, merely to show the new crop (*ukulanga*) to the headman is enough. This I saw done once when a handful of self-sown millet ripened early in the garden. It was not considered a real crop, but the woman who brought her basket to the headman said she did it 'just to show it because Lesa gave it to us. It was just a case of luck.'[3] In the case of the planted crops, however, the first head of grain to ripen or gourd that swells must be brought by its owner to the headman, and the latter blesses it in the usual way, places it at the end of his bed at night, and lastly carries it to the village *ulufuba* or spirit shrine, where it is given to the spirits. When the first new gourds are ripening it is common to see slices of pumpkin exposed in every tiny shrine when travelling from village to village. In the case of *mwangwe*, the headman's wife sometimes makes a dough (*umufuba*) of the new flour, and this is carried by a small boy to the *ulufuba*. All these are the rites known as *ukuposela*. At such ceremonies the priest apparently asks for nothing concrete. He merely, as he says, shows the food to the *imipashi* whose property it ultimately is, and tells them baldly that the food is now ripe. A prayer I heard was as follows: 'We have eaten the new food! May we go in peace! The new food is ripe now. We want to eat it now!'[4]

No tribute is given to the living chief at this time, although of course he gets more beer and grain at harvest time than any other. But the conception that tribute is due to the chief in virtue of his ownership of the land, seems to me to be reflected in the idea that ritual offerings must be made to the spirits at harvest time. The resemblance even extends to the belief that just as a man who gets an unusually good haul of fish or kills much game is bound to give a share to the chief, so when there is an unusually good harvest, it is necessary that a special offering should be made to the

[1] *Ni bupulumushi—Ni kuiba.*

[2] *Mwe shyamfumu! bantu balefunuka fyakulya fyenu. Nabalye fyakulya fyenu cilyelye. Twapapata!*

[3] *Kulangafye, ico Lesa atupela. Ni kushyukafye.* Self-sown Kaffir corn can be eaten without a ceremony among the Bamangwato. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 234.

[4] *Twalye cilyo cipya. Tuende no mutende? Fyakulya fipya mu calo. Tulefwaya tulye!*

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769 796 651 spirits, and even when the foods of the bush—caterpillars, mushrooms, or ants—are very plentiful, a special *mukabilo* (Munuca) performs an *ukuposela* ceremony to offer 'the owners of the land' the fruits of the bush 'because they have given us a lot this year'.

769 796 At the capital, according to the usual custom, the new foods are exposed in the *benye* house instead of being placed at the end of the headman's bed. They are afterwards cooked in the *kamitembo*, the sacred kitchen (cf. p. 148), and then ritually tasted by the chief, his children, and the *bamukabenye*. This is the act known as *ukusumata*, 'to taste', as distinct from *ukuposela*, 'to offer'. It was possibly done in commoners' villages formerly, but now only at the chief's court.

769 796 273 [834] A more impressive form of the *ukusumata* takes place at times of great plenty at the capital,[1] when beer made from the new Kaffir corn is ritually tasted by the chief and all his *bakabilo*—a symbolic presentation of the hierarchical order of Bemba society. For this special rite (*ukusumata masaka*) the *bakabilo* must be summoned, and the chief purified. Beer is first brewed by the head wife in the *kamitembo*, and after purification the Paramount and his wife sleep here, keeping sex taboos till the beer is brewed. This is known as *ukulindilo musunga*, 'to watch for the yeast'.[2] During this time flour made from the new crop has been exposed in the *benye* house for the blessing of the *imipashi*, and some of this is then sprinkled on the sacred beer, to be drunk by the Paramount and the chief *bakabilo* inside the *benye* house, and by the rest in order of seniority outside. After this, the Munuca rubs some of the sacred flour on the chests of the *bakabilo* present, and thus makes them free to celebrate first-fruit rites of their own in their own villages. Later a basket must be carried to the shrines of Kafula, a chief who died of smallpox and was therefore buried alone near the present capital. If liked, the *ulupepo lukalamba* can then begin. Such a ceremony is obviously one of the elaborate alternative forms of the economic rites described above. It was performed apparently three times in Sampa's reign and three times in Cikwanda's. The present Citi-

[1] 'When the land is boiling over'—*Icalo calilabila*.

[2] Compare the function of the Mulemba Cimfwembe in 'watching the trees of the land' and of the Kamenge in 'watching the chief's seeds'. The *cishiko*, the lighter of the chief's sacred fire, has also to 'watch' the new fire when a village is being built. There seems to me some protective power in the presence of a man keeping sex taboos.

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622 701 although he did not necessarily take part in the fighting. As one chief put it, 'If we were killed, the whole *icalo* would fall to pieces'. The ruler had certain military captains in his following, could call up men to fight, direct their operations from afar, and arrange for the performance of war magic for success before battle and for purification from the stain of blood after it.

622 651 The prerogatives of a chief consist in rights over the labour of his people, who are required to do a few days' tribute labour each year and to answer sudden calls for help if made; and also claims to tribute in kind, usually paid in the form of an annual present of beer and/or grain, and portions of animals killed in the hunt.[1] It is through this tribute that he is able to pay his advisers, servants, labourers—and soldiers in the old days. Formerly, he maintained rights to certain monopolies, such as ivory tusks, salt from the big inland deposits at Mpika, and guns and cloth traded [567] from Arabs. Slaves or booty captured by the army were brought to him, and he had a number of his own people enslaved for various offences. Besides these economic prerogatives, he commanded great, one might almost say abject deference, and had the satisfaction of seeing his following grow, his authority increased, and his power over life and death over his subjects recognized.

622 The sanctions for a chief's authority are numerous, and they were still greater in the old days. The most important of these has already been described as the people's belief in their rulers descent from a long line of ancestors and the supernatural powers thought to be so conferred. Besides this, a reputation for generosity and a system by which advancement could only be attained through [687] royal favour naturally bound people to him. Much of his power also rested in the old days on force. A chief practised savage mutilations on those who offended him, injured his interests, laughed at him or members of his family, or stole his wives. A number of these mutilated men and women still survive in Bemba country to-day. Command over the army and over the supply of guns also lay in the chief's hands and there is no doubt that the greatness of the *Bena ŋandu* rested to a large extent on fear. The people explain that the royal family were named after the crocodile because 'they are like crocodiles that seize hold of the common people and tear them to bits with their teeth'.

[1] All these dues are very much harder to exact nowadays (cf. p. 116).